

Natural Connections Program

Native Plants From Seed

Brant Rod and Gun Club Tallgrass Prairie Project

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**Brant Resource
Stewardship Network**

5 Main St. N.
P.O. Box 960
St. George, ON
N0E 1N0
Phone: 519-448-1714
Fax: 519-448-3105
Email: rob.wallis@mnr.gov.on.ca
www.ontariostewardship.org/brant

Healthy plant and wildlife populations require healthy habitats. The Natural Connections Program is helping private landowners and agencies create tallgrass prairie and oak habitats throughout Brant County

Brant's sand plain and gravel moraines are unique habitats that support unique species and varieties of plants. Brant's native plant species have evolved over millennia to be specially adapted to local climate and sites—a process of Natural Selection. This means that Seed Source Matters—to the success of any planting project! A priority of the native plants from seed program is to promote the use of local and native plants and seeds in gardens and habitat creation projects.

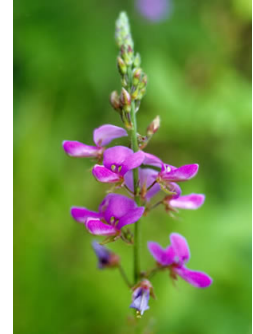
Financial support of the project was provided by The National Wild Turkey Federation.

The Natural Connections Program is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Volunteers with the Brant Rod and Gun Club worked with the Natural Connections Program to create a tallgrass prairie on a 3 hectare piece of land used as a trap shooting range. (photo - bottom left)



The prairie seed was planted in spring 2006 by volunteers of the club (picture bottom right). The seeds originated in Brant County or were purchased from a specialized nursery that produces seeds from local seed sources. It will take the slow growing prairie plants 3-4 years to become established. Until then the club members are tending to them regularly by periodic mowing to keep non-native vegetation cut to approximately 20 cms in height. Periodic prescribed burns will be utilized to improve the prairie plants, which are adapted to fire. Once established the trap range will resemble the picture to the right. Pictures of the trap range in 2006 are shown to the right (clockwise from bottom left: Ken Stevens harrowing the seed into the ground; the trap range in July; Rob Wallis—Brant Resource Stewardship Network - inspecting a patch of showy tic trefoil seedlings; close up of a showy tic trefoil seedling.



The goal of the project is to create a wild turkey habitat demonstration site, using native vegetation suitable for both food, and brood rearing habitat. The primary food plants are two species of legumes - showy tic trefoil and roundheaded bushclover (pictured above right and left) - and little bluestem grass (pictured to the left). Insects that establish in this vegetation become additional food sources for turkey poults.

